

NATIONAL REPORT FOR THE GREAT BUSTARD MOU AND ACTION PLAN

This reporting format is designed to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan associated with the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of the Middle-European Population of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*). Reporting on the Action Plan's implementation will support exchange of information throughout the range and assist the identification of necessary future actions by the Signatory States. The questions presented here go beyond the scope of information already requested from CMS Contracting Parties for national reports to the CMS Conference of the Parties.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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<p>List any other agencies, institutions, or NGOs that have provided input</p> <p>Ukrainian Society for the Protection of Birds , BirdLife - Ukraine</p>
<p>Reports submitted to date: First: 2004 Second: 2008</p>
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<p>Memorandum in effect in country since: [Date: dd / mm / yy]: 17/04/2002</p>
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PART I. GENERAL

This questionnaire follows the structure and numbering of the Action Plan annexed to the Memorandum of Understanding to make it easier to read the relevant action points before the form is filled in. In some cases, however, sub-actions were not listed separately for the sake of simplicity and to avoid duplications. They should however be taken into consideration when answering the questions.

0. National work programme

Is there a national work programme or action plan already in place in your country for the Great Bustard pursuant to Paragraph 4(g) of the Memorandum of Understanding?

Yes No

1. Habitat protection

1.1 Designation of protected areas.

To what extent are the display, breeding, stop-over and wintering sites covered by protected areas?

Designation of protected areas under national law	Classification of Special Protection Areas according to the requirements of Art.4.1 of the EC Birds Directive
<input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%) <input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%) <input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable ¹	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully (>75%) <input type="checkbox"/> High (50-75%) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium (10-49%) <input type="checkbox"/> Low (<10%) <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable ¹

What measures were taken to ensure the adequate protection of the species and its habitat at these sites?

The Great Bustard is listed in the Red Data Book of Ukraine, therefore, according to the Ukrainian legislation, it should be protected throughout its range regardless the conservation status of the territory. Key breeding and wintering sites are protected on Kerch peninsula on some private agricultural fields. Wintering site is protected nearby Biosphere Reserve "Askaniya-Nova" (Kherson region). Great Bustard is breeding in Karalar zakaznik (north of Kerch peninsula) however low nature conservation status of that area did not allow to ensure necessary protection of the species. In June 2007 Karalar landscape zakaznik status was improved and now it is Karalar Regional Landscape Park. Administration of the Park was set up and now the Park is under preparation of the Management Plan. Also the boundaries of the Park will be set officially up. Nevertheless the strict protection is still needed.

Where are the remaining gaps?

General places are on Kerch and Tarhankut peninsulas (AR Krymea), near bay of Syvash (AR Krymea and Kherson oblast`), Pryazov elevation (Zaporizhzhia oblast`)
The wintering places are southeast Kherson oblast`, southwest Zaporizhzhia oblast`, Kerch and Tarhankut peninsulas.

¹ The species occurs only irregularly, no regular stop-over or wintering sites identified.

Are currently unoccupied, but potential breeding habitats identified in your country?

Yes No Not applicable²

If yes, please explain how these areas are protected or managed to enable the re-establishment of Great Bustard.

These areas are not protected and managed.

1.2 Measures taken to ensure the maintenance of Great Bustard habitats outside of protected areas.

Please describe what measures have been taken to maintain land-use practices beneficial for Great Bustard outside of protected areas (e.g., set-aside and extensification schemes, cultivation of alfalfa and oilseed rape for winter, maintenance of rotational grazing, etc.).

Cultivation of autumn planted rape on same farmer fields of the Kerch peninsula (project is implemented by USPB), Kherson region (farmers).

To what extent do these measures, combined with site protection, cover the national population?

- Fully (>75%)
 Most (50-75%)
 Some (10-49%)
 Little (<10%)
 Not at all
 Not applicable¹

Are recently (over the last 20 years) abandoned Great Bustard breeding habitats mapped in your country?

Yes No Not applicable¹

What habitat management measures have been taken to encourage the return of Great Bustard?

No habitat management measures have been taken so far.

If there were any measures taken, please provide information on their impact.

Not applicable. The information on their impact is absent.

1.3 Measures taken to avoid fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats.

Are new projects potentially causing fragmentation of the species' habitat (such as construction of highways and railways, irrigation, planting of shelterbelts, afforestation, power lines, etc.) subject to environmental impact assessment in your country? Yes No Not applicable¹

Is there any aspect of the existing legislation on impact assessment that limits its effective application to prevent fragmentation of Great Bustard habitats? Yes No Not applicable¹

If yes, please provide details.

Have there been any such projects implemented in any Great Bustard habitat in your country since signing this Memorandum of Understanding? Yes No Not applicable¹

² Countries outside of the historic (beginning of 20th Century) breeding range of the species.

Please, give details and describe the outcome of impact monitoring if available.

Planned construction of windfarms on Tarkhankut and Kerch peninsulas is expected to cause the fragmentation of the Great Bustard.

The data collected at the area likely proved such negative effects on the population if the wind farms will be constructed anyway.

2. Prevention of hunting, disturbance and other threats

2.1 Hunting.

Is Great Bustard afforded strict legal protection in your country? Yes No

Please, give details of any hunting restrictions imposed for the benefit of Great Bustard including those on timing of hunting and game management activities.

In Ukraine the hunting on the Great Bustard is officially forbidden nevertheless the level of illegal hunting is considered to be high.

To stop illegal hunting USPB started in 2007 the work on building of volunteer network (hunters, farmers, gamekeepers) on migratory and winter places of the Great Bustard. Currently, such a network exists in south of Kherson oblast. Public awareness company among hunters is taken place.

Please, indicate to what extent these measures ensure the protection of the national Great Bustard population? The national population is covered by restrictions on hunting to prevent hunting-related disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- Not applicable¹

2.2 Prevention of disturbance.

What measures have been taken to prevent disturbance of Great Bustard in your country, including both breeding birds and single individuals or small flocks on migration?

Wintering Great Bustards are protection on areas around “Askania-Nova” Biosphere Reserve Breeding and wintering Great Bustards are protected on Kerch peninsula on some private agricultural fields (implementing USPB).

In 2008 USPB in the framework of Matra KAP Programme a project on restoration of wetlands in Great Bustard habitats near Tobechnikskiy Lake has been implemented. It is expected that driving of cattle pasturing near Tobechnikskiy Lake to a pond through Great Bustard habitats will be stopped in the near future and bird disturbance will be decreased.

Please, indicate to what extent these measures have ensured the protection of the national population.

The national population is covered by restrictions on other activities causing disturbance:

- Fully (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- Not at all
- Not applicable¹

2.3.1 Prevention of predation.

What is the significance of predation to Great Bustard in your country?

Predators destructs about 20% eggs and chicks. Also there is some illegal collecting of eggs and chicks by local people for trade.

What are the main predator species?

Domestic predators (stray dogs), fox, synanthropic Corvidae (*Pica pica*, *Corvus cornix*, *Corvus corax*).

What measures have been taken to control predators in areas where Great Bustard occurs regularly?

The specific measures to control predators have not been taken.

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (predation reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (predation reduced by 10–49%)
- Less effective (predation reduced by less than 10%)
- Not applicable¹

2.3.2 Adoption of measures for power lines.

What is the significance of your country?

Great Bustards regularly come into collision with power lines on wintering places in south of Ukraine.

What proactive and corrective measures have been taken to reduce the mortality caused by existing power lines in your country?

There were discussions with local power engineering specialists on how to avoid Great Bustard mortality caused by power lines and an agreement has been reached to equip the power lines with birdscarers.

What is the size of the populations affected by these corrective measures?

Due to lack of funds there were no works on installation of birdscares.

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (collision with power lines reduced by more than 50%)
- Partially effective (collision with power lines reduced by 10–49%)
- Ineffective (collision with power lines reduced by less than 10%)
- Not applicable¹

2.3.3 Compensatory measures.

What is the size (in hectares) of Great Bustard habitat lost or degraded for any reasons since the Memorandum of Understanding entered into effect (1 June 2001)?

Not estimated

What is the size of the populations affected?

No data available

Were these habitat losses compensated? Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

If yes, please explain how.

Were these measures effective? Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

Please, give details on the effectiveness or explain why they were not effective if that is the case.

3. Possession and trade

Is collection of Great Bustard eggs or chicks, the possession of and trade in the birds and their eggs prohibited in your country? Yes No

How are these restrictions enforced? What are the remaining shortcomings, if any?

In general State Ecological Inspection is responsible for enforcement of restrictions. In spite of existing ban some collection of eggs and nestlings are taken place caused by pure control and because of some ornithologists collect the resources as well for some private breeding Centers.

Please indicate if any exemption is granted or not all of these activities are prohibited.

No

4. Recovery measures

4.1 Captive breeding* in emergency situations.

Is captive breeding playing any role in Great Bustard conservation in your country? Yes No

There were attempts to breed Great Bustard in Kharkiv oblast. However, those attempts had a low success and currently there are no activities on Great Bustard breeding in captivity for conservation purposes in Ukraine

Some people illegally collect the eggs and chicks and in such way play negative role in species population reproductive success.

Please, describe the measures, staff and facilities involved and how these operations comply with the IUCN criteria on reintroductions.

No reintroduction activities are taken place.

4.2 Reintroduction.

Have there been any measures taken to reintroduce the species in your country? Yes No

If yes, please describe the progress. If there was any feasibility study carried out, please summarize its conclusions.

No

4.3 Monitoring of the success of release programmes.

* In effect, "captive breeding" should be read as "captive rearing" according to current practices.

Are captive reared birds released in your country?

Yes No

If yes, please summarize the experience with release programmes in your country. What is the survival rate of released birds? What is the breeding performance of released birds?

There is no release programmes in the country.

What is the overall assessment of release programmes based on the survival of released birds one year after release?

- Effective (the survival is about the same as of the wild ones)
- Partially effective (the survival rate is lower than 75% of the wild birds)
- Ineffective (the survival is less than 25% of wild birds)
- Not applicable³

5. Cross-border conservation measure

Has your country undertaken any cross-border conservation measures with neighbouring countries?

Yes No Not applicable⁴

Please, give details of your country's collaboration with neighbouring countries on national surveys, research, monitoring and conservation activities for Great Bustard. Especially, list any measures taken to harmonise legal instruments protecting Great Bustard and its habitats, as well as funding you have provided to Great Bustard for particular conservation actions in other Range States.

There was joint Ukrainian-Russian census of Great Bustard during nesting and premigration period in Saratov oblast and during wintering in south of Ukraine.

6. Monitoring and research

6.1.1 Monitoring of population size and population trends.

Are the breeding, migratory or wintering Great Bustard populations monitored in your country?

Yes No

What proportion of the national population is monitored?

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None
- Not applicable¹

³ No release is taking place in the country.

⁴ For countries which do not have any transboundary population.

What is the size and trend in the national population?⁵

Breeding/resident population

Non-breeding population (on passage, wintering)

No. of males: 260-340

No. of males: 4325-5400

No. of females: 260-340

No. of females: 4325-5400

No. immature males: __?__

No. immature males: __?__

Trend: Declined by 10% over the last 10 years

Trend: Declined by 20% over the last 10 years

Stable

Stable

Increased by __% over the last 10 years

Stable

Increased by __% over the last 10 years

For countries where the species occurs only occasionally, please give the details of known observations within the reporting period:

6.1.2 Monitoring of the effects of habitat management.

Is the effect of habitat conservation measures monitored in your country?

Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

What can be learned from these studies?

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

It is necessary to collect data on Great Bustard on a regular basis in the framework of State Cadastre of Animal Kingdom.

6.2.1 Comparative ecological studies.

Have there been any comparative studies carried out on the population dynamics, habitat requirements, effects of habitat changes and causes of decline in your country in collaboration with other Range States?

Yes No Not applicable¹

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published

What can be learned from these studies?

What are the remaining gaps where the Memorandum of Understanding could assist?

Joint studies on assessment of current state of Great Bustard in Ukraine during nesting period and on withering areas (numbers, distribution, habitat quality, negative impacts, threats) are desirable.

It is necessary to:

- promote farming practices that reduce the harmful effects of agriculture;
- promote use other practices that are compatible with the requirements of Great Bustard

⁵ Only for countries where the species occurs regularly.

- protection and the conservation of natural resources, natural areas and the landscape;
- promote set aside farmland for environmental purposes, especially as protected areas;
- promote managing land for public access and ecotourism.

6.2.2 Studies on mortality factors.

Are the causes of Great Bustard mortality understood in your country?

Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published.

Count of Great Bustard mortality because of collision with power lines has been conducted (Andryushchenko Yu. A., Beskaravayny M. M., Stadnichenko I. S. On mortality of Great Bustard and other birds because of collisions with power lines in wintering areas / Branta: Collected papers of the Azov-Black Sea Ornithological Station, Issue 5 – Melitopol: Branta, 2002). [Rus.]

During regular censuses of Great Bustard the cases of hunting for this species had been recorded (fragmentary data)

According to interviewing of population and ornithologists a lot of Great Bustards died in extremely cold winter 2006 (January – February)

What can be learned from these studies?

Regular control for Great Bustard nesting and wintering in the south of Ukraine is necessary.

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

6.2.3 Investigation of factors limiting breeding success.

Are the factors limiting breeding success in core populations understood in your country?

Yes Partially No Not applicable⁶

Please, provide a list of on-going and completed studies with references if results are already published

Andryushchenko Yu. A., Stadnichenko I. S. Current State and peculiarities of habitats of Great Bustard, Little Bustard and Norfolk plover in the south of Left-Bank Ukraine / Branta: Collected Papers of Azov-Black Ornithological Station, Issue 2. – Melitopol: Branta – Simferopol, Sonat, 1999. – Pp. 135–151. [Rus.]

Andryushchenko Yu. A. National Action Plan for the conservation of Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) Conservation in Ukraine / National Action Plans for the conservation of globally threatened birds. – Kyiv: SoftArt, 2000. – Pp. 168–179. [Ukr.]

Andryushchenko Yu. A. New data on ecology of Demoiselle Crane, Great Bustard and Norfolk plover in the south of Ukraine / Ornithological studies in North Eurasia: Proceedings of the 12th International Ornithological Conference of North Eurasia. Stavropol, Stavropol State University Press, 2006. [Rus.]

Yaremchenko, O., Bakhtiarov, O. (2006) Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*) in Ukraine: History, Current Status, Conservation Problems and Strategies.. Pp. 145–149 in Leitao, D., Jolivet, C., Rodriguez, M., Tavares, J. eds. Bustard Conservation in Europe in the last 15 years: current trends, best practices and future priorities. SPEA.

What can be learned from these studies?

⁶ Only for breeding countries.

The studies show that Great Bustard has a potential (ecological, population, ethological) to restore its previous range, however a decline of numbers of breeding birds are observed. This is caused by lack of proper habitat management of the species, decreasing of negative impact on the species, prevention of taking eggs and nestlings. Also, it is not enough protected area of higher rank (nature reserve, national nature parks, regional landscape parks) in Ukraine in which Great Bustard can breed.

What are the remaining gaps and what measures are you going to take to address these gaps?

It is necessary to:

1. manage habitat in breeding area of Great Bustard;
2. take measures in order to prevent taking eggs and nestlings;
3. regulate numbers of predators;
4. create national parks in Kerch and Tarkhankut peninsulas;
5. conduct public awareness companies and among hunters in particular.

6.2.4 Studies on migration.

Were there any studies on migration routes and wintering places carried out in your country?

Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

Some results of such research are reflected in:

Andryushchenko Yu. A., Gorlov P. I., Grinchenko A. B., Oleynik D. S., Prokopenko S. P. On Great Bustard wintering in south of Ukraine in January 2000 / Branta: Collected papers of Azov-Black Sea Ornithological Station. Issue 3. Melotopol: Branta, 2000. [Rus.]

Anryushchenko Yu. A., Arsievich N. G., Martynets M. M., Stadnichenko I. S., Oleynik D. S. Results of Great Bustard census in south of Ukraine in winter 1998–1999 / Otididae in Russia and adjacent countries. Collected scientific papers. Saratov. 2000. [Rus.]

Andryushchenko Yu. Current state of the Great Bustard *Otis tarda* wintering population in south Ukraine Sandgrouse. Vol. 24 (2). OSME. Bedfordshire, 2002. – P. 109–116.

Where are the key sites and what is the size of the population they support?

About 80% of 8650–10800 Great Bustard individuals wintering in the south of Ukraine are located in southeast of Kherson oblast and southwest of Zaporizhzhya oblast, more than 10% – in Kerch peninsula, about 3% – in Tarkhankut upland, others located in different places.

Do you have any knowledge about the origin of these birds supported by ringing or other marking methods?

According to satellite tracking for Great Bustards marked by German colleagues in Saratov Oblast of Russia and comparing data of autumn birds censuses in that area and winter censuses in south of Ukraine it can be asserted that more than 80% of birds that came for wintering are from southeast of European part of Russia.

What are the remaining gaps and what measures will your country do to address these gaps?

It is necessary to create a brach of Askania-Nova Biosphere reserve on the territory of Agayman area to protect the largest aggregation of wintering Great Bustard in Ukraine. It is necessary to create nationa parks in Kerch peninsula for protection of Ukrainian population of the species.

Strengthening control over illegal hunting for Great Bustard first of all in southeast of Kherson oblast and Kerch peninsula.

7. Training of staff working in conservation bodies

Is there any mechanism in place in your country to share information on biological characteristics

and living requirements of Great Bustard, legal matters, census techniques and management practices to personnel working regularly with the species? Yes No Not applicable¹

If yes, please describe it.

Basic information on Great Bustard biological characteristics and legal status available in the Red Data Book of Ukraine accessible for public in Internet and as a hard copy in public libraries.

Have personnel dealing with Great Bustard participated in any exchange programme in other Range States? Yes No Not applicable¹

If yes, please give details on number of staff involved, country visited and how the lessons were applied in your country.

8. Increasing awareness of the need to protect Great Bustards and their habitat

What measures have been taken to increase the awareness about the protection needs of the species and its habitat in your country since signing the Memorandum of Understanding?

A poster on Great Bustard numbers its migration from Russia and measures on protection of the species and its habitats has been developed, published and disseminated among population.

Do farmers, shepherds, political decision makers and local and regional authorities support Great Bustard conservation? Yes Partially No

What are the remaining gaps or problems and how are you going to address them?

It is necessary to develop and publish booklets with new information on the state of Great Bustards in Ukraine, needs for their protection on breeding and wintering sites. Popular science film is desirable as well.

There is a need for meetings with farmers, shepherds, decision makers, local and regional authorities about problems to protect Great Bustards and their habitat.

9. Economic measures

Have there been any initiatives taken to develop economic activities that are in line with the conservation requirements of Great Bustard in your country? Yes Partially No Not applicable¹

What percentage of the population is covered in total by these measures?

- All (>75%)
- Most (50-75%)
- Some (10-49%)
- Little (<10%)
- None
- Not applicable

How effective were these measures?

- Effective (more than 50% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Partially effective (10–49% of the targeted area is managed according to the species' needs)
- Ineffective (less than 10% according to the species' needs)
- Not applicable¹

10. Threats

Please, fill in the table below on main threats to the species in your country. Use the threat scores categories below to quantify their significance at national level. Please, provide an explanation on what basis you have assigned the threat score and preferably provide reference. Add additional lines, if necessary.

Threat scores:

Critical: a factor causing or likely to cause **very rapid declines** (>30% over 10 years).

High: a factor causing or likely to cause **rapid declines** (20-30% over 10 years).

Medium: a factor causing or likely to cause relatively **slow, but significant, declines** (10-20% over 10 years).

Low: a factor causing or likely to cause **fluctuations**.

Local: a factor causing local declines but likely to cause **negligible declines at population level**.

Unknown: a factor that is likely to affect the species but it is unknown to what extent.

Threat name	Threat score	Explanation and reference
Habitat loss	Medium	Own studies
Losses of eggs and chicks	High	Own observations
Predation	High	Own observations
Collision with powerlines	Medium	Own studies
Human disturbance	High	Own studies
Pesticides	Local	Own observations
Illegal hunting	Critical	Data of questionnaire
Burning vegetation	Medium	Own observations

PART II. COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Please report on the implementation of the country-specific actions listed for your country in Part II of the Action Plan and provide information if that is not already covered by your answers under Part I. Please describe not only the measures taken but also their impact on Great Bustard or its habitat in the context of the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Action Plan. Where you have already answered on country-specific actions in Part I, please only add a reference to the relevant answer here.

Some country-specific measures are described in pp. 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3.2, 5, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 6.2.4.